

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 008325
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:S/S-O:DCAMP

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:DCAMP

-----125620 120917Z /10

R 120355Z JAN 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCUSAREUR

USNMR SHAPE

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 008325

EXDIS MILITARY DISTRIBUTE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM ATHENS DATED JANUARY 11, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ANKARA, USNATO, NICOSIA IS
REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 0266

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DEPARTMENT PASS AS INFO SPECAT EXCLUSIVE TO SECNAV FOR UNDERSEC
WOOLSEY, SECDEF FOR ISA, USCINCEUR, CINCUSAFE, CINCUSNAVEUR, CINC-
USAREUR, USNMR SHAPE, AND USDOCOSOUTH

MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

EO 11652: XGDS-1

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TAGS: MARR, MASS, NATO, GR

SUBJ: MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF'S COMMENTS ON GREEK DCA AND
NATO RELATIONSHIP

1. DURING CALL BY NAVY UNDER SECRETARY WOOLSEY AND ME ON MINISTER
OF DEFENSE AVEROFF (WHO WAS AT HOME WITH FLU), THE CONVERSATION RE-
VOLVED AROUND PROBLEMS OF THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND GREECE'S

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S., TURKEY AND NATO. AVEROFF MADE A WIDE-RANGING PRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS WHICH UNDERLIE PRESENT GOG POSITIONS ON THESE ISSUES, AND MOST OF WHAT HE HAD TO SAY IS FAMILIAR TO ADDRESSEES. HIS COMMENTS ON THE STATUS AND FUTURE OF THE U.S.-GREEK DCA AND ON THE KIND OF RELATIONSHIP GREECE COULD ACCEPT WITH NATO, HOWEVER, REVEAL HIS CURRENT THINKING ON THESE MATTERS, WHICH HE ADMITTED WAS IN SOME INSTANCES AT VARIANCE WITH THE OFFICIAL GOG POSITION, AND I PASS A DISTILLATION OF HIS COMMENTS FOR WHAT IT MAY BE WORTH. PLEASE PROTECT HIS CONFIDENCE.

2. AVEROFF EMPHASIZED THAT BECAUSE OF EVENTS DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS THE GREEK PEOPLE NOW VIEW TURKEY RATHER THAN THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS COMMUNIST ALLIES AS THE PRINCIPAL THREAT TO GREECE. IN HIS VIEW, THIS IS REGRETTABLE BUT UNDERSTANDABLE BECAUSE OF TURKISH ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE CREATED THE SUSPICION HERE THAT TURKEY HAS EMBARKED ON A NEW EXPANSIONIST PHASE AND HAS DESIGNS ON GREEK TERRITORY AND LEGAL RIGHTS IN THE AEGEAN. THE U.S. MUST THEREFORE BE CAREFUL THAT ITS ACTIONS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN DO NOT SO UNBALANCE THE RELATIVE MILITARY POWER OF GREECE AND TURKEY THAT THE LATTER MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO TRY TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES BY MILITARY ACTION.

3. THAT IS THE REASON, AVEROFF INSISTED, THAT GREECE FELT COMPELLED IN 1976 TO REQUIRE A \$700 MILLION MILITARY ASSISTANCE PACKAGE AS PART OF THE DCA AFTER THE U.S. PROMISED TURKEY \$1 BILLION. HE SEES CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FACILITIES HERE AS BEING IN GREECE'S OWN SECURITY INTERESTS AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE U.S. AND NATO, AND FOR THAT REASON IS SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED BY THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE DCA AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT GREECE WANTS TO SELL OR RENT THE FACILITIES. IN DEFENDING THE DCA PUBLICLY AFTER IT IS SIGNED AND SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT, AVEROFF SAID HE WOULD PREFER NOT TO HAVE THIS APPARENT PRICE TAG ATTACHED, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND HE WOULD NOT WANT TO CONCLUDE THE GREEK DCA WITHOUT THE AID COMMITMENT AND THEN HAVE TO RETURN HAT-IN-HAND FOR THE MONEY IF THE TURKS GET THEIR BILLION DOLLARS FROM CONGRESS.

4. AVEROFF PERSONALLY THINKS THE DCA WITH THE U.S. COULD AND SHOULD BE SIGNED WITHOUT NECESSARILY TYING IT TO SOLUTION OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM OR RESOLUTION OF GREECE'S NEW RELATIONSHIP TO NATO. HE SAID THAT IN INNER-CABINET MEETINGS HE HAD TAKEN THAT POSITION, ALTHOUGH HE UNDERSTANDS AND OF COURSE ACCEPTS THE PRIME MINISTER'S CONTRARY DECISION. A TELLING ARGUMENT IN AVEROFF'S OPINION FOR NOT GOING FORWARD WITH THE DCA NOW IS THAT THE OPPOSITION MIGHT CALL FOR A REFERENDUM ON THE ISSUE WHICH, IN THE ABSENCE OF A SOLUTION TO THE BROADER PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD GIVE THE GOG A CREDIBLE FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH TO DEFEND THE DCA, COULD TEAR THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FABRIC APART.

5. RESTORING THE GREEK-NATO RELATIONSHIP WILL BE A LOT EASIER THAN MOST PEOPLE THINK, AVEROFF CONTENDED. GREECE IS PREPARED TO CO-OPERATE FULLY IN NATO PLANNING, EXERCISES, INFRA-STRUCTURE PREPARATIONS, INTELLIGENCE SHARING AND ALL OTHER ASPECTS OF FULL MILITARY MEMBERSHIP, AS LONG AS IT RETAINS NATIONAL CONTROL OVER ITS ARMED FORCES IN PEACETIME SO AS ALWAYS TO BE PREPARED TO MEET THE PERCEIVED TURKISH THREAT. NATO'S DELAY IN RESPONDING TO THE GOG PROPOSAL OF JANUARY 27, 1977, HE SAID, AND "OBSTRUCTIONS" CREATED BY "CERTAIN COUNTRIES" WHICH HAVE PREVENTED GREATER GREEK PARTICIPATION IN NATO MILITARY AFFAIRS HAVE LED SOME GOG OFFICIALS TO CONCLUDE THAT NATO DOES NOT WISH GREECE BACK IN THE FOLD AND IS TRYING TO FORCE IT EITHER TO ACCEPT UNACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS OR WITHDRAW COMPLETELY. AVEROFF SAID HE HAS THUS FAR BEEN ABLE TO DEFEND NATO
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AGAINST THESE CHARGES BY EXPLAINING THE CONTEXT IN WHICH NATO DECISIONS AND ACTIONS ARE TAKING PLACE, BUT THE CONTINUING DELAY IS EMBARRASSING TO THOSE IN GREECE WHO ARE WORKING FOR A RESTORED GREEK-NATO RELATIONSHIP.
MILLS UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE008325
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:DCAMP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780017-1227
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780169/aaaacgcr.tel
Line Count: 141
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0937fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3782664
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MINISTER OF DEFENSE AVEROFF'S COMMENTS ON GREEK DCA AND NATO RELATIONSHIP
TAGS: MARR, MASS, PEPR, GR, US, NATO
To: SECNAV USCINCEUR MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0937fce3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014